

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Robert C. "Bobby" Scott issued the following statement on the contempt citation issued against U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder by the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee today:

"For the last 15 months, the Attorney General and the Justice Department have spent considerable time and resources responding to the Oversight and Government Reform Committee's inquiry into the gunrunning operation known as "Fast and Furious". The operation is very similar to a gunrunning program operated during the Bush Administration, apparently with the knowledge of then-Attorney General Michael Mukasey. Thousands of pages of documents have been provided by the Attorney General in response to requests, but the Committee continues to request more. Fortunately, the Committee has dropped its demand for documents the Attorney General was prohibited by law to disclose. However, the Committee has rejected all offers of the Attorney General for an agreement on additional information to be provided to the Committee, thereby refusing to allow the Attorney General to say "yes" to its requests. Instead, the Committee has now voted along partisan lines to hold the Attorney General in contempt of Congress for failure to provide more information, despite the fact that the President has legitimately exercised his right of executive privilege over the information requested.

"Regrettably, it is now clear that the politics of declaring the Attorney General in contempt of Congress is more important to the Committee's Majority than acquiring information to which it is entitled. This presents an unfortunate and unnecessary constitutional confrontation that reflects what's wrong with the priorities of the House of Representatives. This is nothing more than an effort to embarrass the Attorney General to score cheap political points in an election year."

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